

VZCZCXRO4626

RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH

DE RUEHVN #0068 0300718

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

R 300718Z JAN 08

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1787

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2242

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC

RHMFIUU/JPAC ANNEX CAMP SMITH HI

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 000068

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G

STATE FOR EAP/MLS

STATE FOR EAP/RSP

STATE FOR EAP/EP

STATE FOR INR

STATE FOR OES/STC (PBATES)

STATE FOR OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA)

STATE FOR MED

STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN, TSHUBERT )

BANGKOK FOR RMO

BANGKOK FOR CDC (MALONEY AND ZIMMERMAN)

BANGKOK FOR USAID (JMACARTHUR AND BOWLES)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: MASS SOCI PREL AMED EAID LA

SUBJECT: CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN SOUTHERN LAOS ABATING

REF: VIENTIANE 41

**¶1.** (U) Summary: The cholera outbreak in southern Laos that began in mid-December (reftel) appears to be abating. The director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) office in Laos expressed appreciation for USG interest in assisting but said that no additional resources are necessary at this time.  
End summary.

**¶2.** (SBU) As noted in Reftel, there was an outbreak of cholera in Sekong province in southern Laos beginning on December 19, 2007. Approximately 300 cases were reported, with three fatalities. As of mid-January, WHO and Lao health officials were concerned about the possibility that the outbreak would spread from the two affected districts to other areas in Sekong and neighboring provinces. However, the epidemic seems to be abating. WHO Country Director Dong Il Ahn told the DCM on January 28 that there had been no new cases since January 24. The outbreak, he said, has not spread beyond the two districts in Sekong province where it was originally identified. According to WHO protocols, an epidemic is not declared to be over until ten days have passed since the last new case. However, according to Ahn, "there is no reason to believe that the outbreak is ongoing." Nevertheless, Dr. Ahn said, health officials continue to monitor surrounding areas, especially Champasak province, to make sure the illness is not spreading.

**¶3.** (SBU) Dr. Ahn told the DCM that he appreciated the USG's willingness to explore the possibility of providing water purification equipment or other equipment through the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). However, this is not necessary at this point, given that the epidemic appears to be contained and chlorination and boiling of water have approved effective in the affected areas.

**¶4.** (SBU) Comment: Embassy Vientiane appreciates the efforts of those at PACOM, the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC), and others to identify ways to assist in addressing the epidemic. Luckily, this assistance is not necessary at this time. End summary.

Huso